

Fireworks by moonlitwings

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Summary:

Max basically forces Billy to light her fireworks for New Years.

Fireworks

Author's Note:

Hellllooooo. Feels like I haven't posted in forever. Like it says in the tags, it's July 4th today but i'm posting about New Years lmao. That's because I had like half of this written out months ago, planning to post it on New Years. That never happened, so whats the closest thing to New Years? Fourth of July because both include fireworks lmfao. I wrote majority of this yesterday, so sorry if it reads rushed because it was. :) Enjoy!

It's New Year's eve.

He would've been spending it at Steve's place if Neil didn't insist that New Year's was a time for family to reflect on the past year and a time to celebrate the new one together. Bullshit.

Max would've been at Mike's house with the rest of her little buddies, but Neil put a stop to that too. She wouldn't stop going on and on about the fireworks the Wheelers were going to put out that she's going to miss. *Apparently*, they've got the fancy ones that make shapes in the sky. When she complained to Neil, he told her that if she wanted to have fireworks. She can buy them herself. Having spent all of her allowance, guess who she goes to? Yup.

He originally refused to buy fireworks, but she promised if he did, that she'd cover for him the next time he sneaks out, and damn if that didn't sound like a good deal. That is, until he realized that fireworks were fucking expensive. Max had gone with him to the mall to pick some up and when he looked at the price and glanced back at Max, she had plastered on the biggest shit-eating grin. It took everything in him in that moment not to smack her upside the head. Bitch.

But they shook on it, so there was no going back. A Hargrove's promise. Besides, it'll be worth it in the end when Billy makes up for lost time with Steve. He's got some ideas in mind.

But now they're standing in their front yard trying to figure out how to light this shit up. It's twenty minutes before twelve. And Princess Maxine wants to light them exactly when it hits midnight. *It has to be on time!*

"It says we should wear protective eyewear," Max reads, holding out the instructions in front of her face. Billy snatches it from her and throws it to the side. He meant for it to be an aggressive move, but the paper just pathetically flutters to the ground.

"We don't need that shit. I've done this before," he says, squatting on the floor, putting the fireworks on a board.

Max squints her eyes at him, doubtful. He *has* done it before with his friends back in Cali. Sure, they might've aimed wrong and almost shot someone's eye out, but it was fine in the end. How hard can it be to do it with your little sister?

Turns out pretty hard. With Max peering over his shoulder at every second trying to correct him with those damn instructions, he nearly threw her back into the house. He probably should've. She's a pain in the ass.

He elbows her in the stomach, shoving her back and making her flinch hard at the impact. He almost turns around to make sure she's ok. He doesn't.

"Stop standing over me," he says instead. "It's fucking weird."

Thankfully, she shoves him right back just as hard. "You're doing it wrong, *asshole*. Why don't you get off your high horse and read the instructions for once."

He ignores her, bringing his focus back to fireworks in front of him. The hell does she know? He brings the lighter to one of the fireworks.

"Wait! Don't light it now," Max says, turning to run back inside. "Let me get my mom."

Just as she's about to sprint back inside, Billy grabs her by the back of the shirt, bringing her to a halt.

“Chill the fuck out. I’m just gonna test it out.”

“It’s not even midnight yet,” she pouts as she wrestles his arm off her shirt.

“I said I’m testing it out, dumbass. Calm down.” He lets her go with a final tug and squats back down with the board of fireworks. Now he just needs to bring the lighter a little closer--

“Wait, maybe we should--” he doesn’t wait for her to finish before bringing the lighter to one of the fireworks, watching the flame catch on.

He’s quick to his feet, walking backwards, bringing Max with him. She doesn’t fight him, her eyes wide and focused on the flame, watching it get closer and closer, until-BAM. The firework shoots up in the sky bursting and letting out a hail of red sparks. He doesn’t hear her at first, the sound of the burst deafening him for a second. He forgot how loud they were up close.

“Billy! *Billy!*”

“The hell do you want!,” he shouts, patience finally wearing thin with her constant nagging.

She’s panicking, waving her hand frantically in the direction of---shit.

Their fucking *bush* caught on fire. He almost faceplants running toward it. Probably would’ve deserved it too, but he reaches the bush in a split second and stamps the fire out quick enough. Why does shit always go down when he’s around? All things considered, it’s not the worst thing that could’ve caught on fire, but still.

“How the fuck--”

“I KNEW THIS WAS GONNA HAPPEN”

Oh for fucks sake. He spins around to glare at Max. “Well, why didn’t you say anything?”

“Like you’ve been bothering to listen to anything I’ve been saying for the past fifteen fucking minutes!” she shrieks, stamping her foot. She

looks like she's imitating a toddler, but Billy figures now's not the time to point that out. "I literally told you that we should bring the extinguisher just in case!"

She *did* say something like that now that he thinks about it. Probably mentioned it sometime between the rant about the Wheelers and the droning on about the instructions. He internally curses himself for not paying attention to her for once.

"Well, we didn't end up needing one, did we?"

Her jaw drops slightly and she just gapes at him. "You're a fucking psycho."

"Yeah, yeah. Now help me--"

"The hell are you two making a racket about?"

Fucking great. Perfect.

"Nothing, dad," Billy bit out. "I just lit a firework to test it out. Max helped me."

Neil glanced at Max, eyeing her as if that was gonna reveal anything. "Did she? Not banging up anything are we?"

"No, sir," Billy replies, hands in his pockets. Subtly moving in front of the bush so that maybe, just maybe, Neil won't see the burn marks. Thankfully, the entire bush wasn't burnt, just the edge. He could probably hide it or maybe break it off. Neil won't notice it just yet.

They stare at each other for a moment. Neil doesn't say anything aloud, but Billy can see the threat behind the eyes. After a minute, Neil gives him a nod of approval and saunters back inside. He breathes a sigh of relief. Maybe he just didn't want to give Billy too much shit for New Year's sake. He's just grateful he won't have to show up to Steve's house bruised up again.

"That was a close one," Max mumbles.

"No shit."

Five minutes 'till midnight.

Billy squats down in front of the fireworks again. "Hand me the instructions," he says, sticking a hand out towards Max who beamed at him, glad he's finally listening to her.

He snatches them out of her hand and gets back to work, fidgeting around with the set before standing back up.

"Well Maxine? Do I finally have your approval?"

"Firstly, don't call me that. Secondly," she says, making a big show of inspecting the fireworks, circling around them, "Yes."

"If this shit lights a bush on fire, I'm coming for your head."

She looks a little hesitant at that, but he ruffles her hair and she gives him a soft smile in return.

"Should we ask if they're coming out to watch?"

Billy checks his watch. "Nah. One minute 'till midnight. They're probably watching the ball drop. I don't give a shit."

"Yeah," Max shrugs. "I don't really care either. Let's just light them ourselves." Lies. He can tell by the way she keeps looking over her shoulder for her mom that she does care. Susan won't join them. He knows that much. Wherever Neil is, she is. She won't watch fireworks with them unless Neil does, and there's no way he's going to want to do that despite his claim of today being a time for family. Billy knows better. Max will too one day.

15 seconds until midnight.

"You wanna light them?"

Her head snaps up to look at him. "Really?"

"Don't blow shit up, though," he says, handing the lighter to her. Neil would most definitely blow a gasket if he found out his 13 year old daughter was the one lighting fireworks. But what's life without a little risk?

She grins. "So basically don't do what you did."

"Exactly," he chuckles. "You know how to light it?"

"I think so."

"Have at it," he says, letting her go but staying close in case she screws shit up.

Five seconds 'till midnight.

Four

Three

Two

Max quickly lights the fireworks in a swift motion, and turns to run back. She covers her ears as the fireworks all fly up, bursting in the sky with a multitude of colors. From a distance, Billy sees other fireworks bursting, neighbors shouting. He even spots a yellow one shaped like a star right above their house that Max points excitedly to. He might have snuck one in the cart when he saw Max looking longingly at it. Probably not as cool as it would've been at the Wheeler's, but it's something. She's still a whiny little bitch.

Turning back towards the door, he sees Susan peeking through the window, a soft smile, strikingly similar to Max's on her face.

Happy New Year.

Author's Note:

Thanks for making it till the end! If you want, leave a comment or kudos. ;)

Also, I have a couple more drabbles on my tumblr [@moonlitwings1](#) if you want to see more! Happy fourth of July!!